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MONTANA FARM/RANCH HOTLINE

For those who wish to receive assistance from the Agricultural Assistance Program, please call:

TOLL FREE

1-800-722-FARM

For additional information contact:
Michael Murphy or Lee Boyer
Montana Department of Agriculture
Agriculture/Livestock Building
Capitol Station
Helena, Montana 59620-0201
1-800-722-FARM

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MONTANA AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND FARM/RANCH HOTLINE

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Referral Services
Financial Consulting
Peer Counseling
Debt Mediation

Montana Department of Agriculture
Keith Kelly, Director

AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
AND
MONTANA FARM/RANCH HOTLINE

PROGRAM PURPOSE:

The Montana Agricultural Assistance Program is designed to assist individual farmers and ranchers who are financially distressed by providing assistance and counseling to manage farm credit problems, to avoid or mitigate forced liquidation or farm bankruptcies and foreclosures, and to cope with the financial stress resulting from the adverse conditions of agriculture in Montana.

PROGRAM ASSISTANCE:

FINANCIAL CONSULTING — Individuals from the agricultural financial community are available to evaluate prospects for future operating success. These individuals are specially trained to aid financially distressed farmers and ranchers with financial statements, budgeting, cash flow analysis, and profit or loss statements, as well as providing an assessment of various debt restructuring and collateralization options.

Expert financial management evaluation may be what is needed to determine the extent of financial difficulty and the means for maintaining a cash flow in an agricultural operation.

PEER COUNSELING — Individuals who are or have been involved in production agriculture and who have been trained through the department and others in financial counseling, emotional support, and mediation and negotiation techniques will work to aid financially-distressed farmers and ranchers through this program. Peer counselors will be able to refer farmers and ranchers to many available services and programs that they may need.

DEBT MEDIATION — Specially trained individuals knowledgeable in agricultural and financial matters can provide impartial loan mediation assistance to the farmer or rancher and creditor where there is danger of foreclosure and can negotiate to arrive at a mutually-acceptable agreement that allows the producer to continue in agriculture. Mediation is voluntary and must be agreed to by both the farmer or rancher and the creditor(s). If at any point either party decides to abandon the mediation process, mediation terminates. Mediation assistance may be requested by either the producer or a creditor by contacting the Montana Department of Agriculture by phone or mail.

LEGAL INFORMATION SERVICES — Farmers and ranchers will have access to legal information assistance made available through arrangements with the Montana Legal Services Association and the University of Montana Law School. Legal information assistance will be provided through peer counselors and financial consultants as questions or issues are identified. Direct legal assistance will not be available except in very limited cases.

PROGRAM GOALS:

It is the goal of the Agricultural Assistance Program to aid and assist farmers and ranchers so they may continue productively and self-sufficiently. For those who may not be able to continue agricultural activities, the Agricultural Assistance Program will provide information and assistance regarding various social service programs to help during the transition from production agriculture to other occupational areas.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All materials, data, and information received by the department with respect to any request filed under the Agricultural Assistance Program (80-13-211 Montana Code Annotated) are confidential and are not subject to examination or disclosure as public information.